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Appl. No. 10/668,020
Prelim. Amdt. dated June 24, 2004
Prior to First Office Action

Amendments to the claims:

The listing of claims and the claims will replace all prior versions of claims and listings of claims to the application:

1-15-Original

16-Currently Amended

17-21-Original

Appl. No. 10/668,020
Prelim. Amdt. dated June 24, 2004
Prior to first Office Action

CLAIMS

1. A rail connector for a firearm having a front sight, the rail connector comprising:

a connector portion adapted to mount the rail connector to the front sight; and
six mounting rails coupled to the connector portion.

2. The rail connector according to claim 1, and further comprising a handguard portion integrally formed with said connector portion and arranged for mounting about the barrel of the firearm, wherein four of said six mounting rails are integrally formed with said handguard portion.

3. A rail connector for mounting on a firearm having a front sight, the connector comprising:

at least two mounting rails; and

a fastening member for securely fastening the connector directly to the front sight of the firearm, said fastening member being coupled to said mounting rails.

4. The rail connector according to claim 3, wherein said the fastening member is shaped to seat securely in an aperture defined by the front sight.

5. The rail connector according to claim 4, wherein:

the sight includes a triangular projection defining a triangular aperture with a depending shoulder therethrough, and

the fastening member includes a shaped protrusion for seating in the aperture against the shoulder, and a protruding lip for lockingly engaging a lower leg of the triangular projection.

Appl. No. 10/668,020
Prelim. Amtd. dated June 24, 2004
Prior to first Office Action

6. The rail connector according to claim 3, wherein the connector includes two half portions, each including a rail integrally formed with one half the fastening member, the half portions being adapted to seat on opposite sides of the sight and be connected to one another.

7. The rail connector according to claim 6, wherein the two rails are formed coaxially in alignment with the fastening member.

8. The rail connector according to claim 6, wherein the two rails are displaced from and parallel to a longitudinal axis of the fastening member.

9. The rail connector according to claim 3, wherein the fastening member is integrally formed with one rail and is arranged to be coupled to a second rail from an opposite side of the sight, after seating through one side of the front sight of the weapon.

10. The rail connector according to claim 6, and further including a handguard portion integrally formed with the fastening member and integrally formed with at least one rail.

11. The rail connector according to claim 10, and including four rails integrally formed with said handguard portion.

12. The rail connector according to claim 10 and further including a circumferential groove arranged to engage a toothed barrel nut about the firearm barrel.

Appl. No. 10/668,020
Prelim. Amtd. dated June 24, 2004
Prior to first Office Action

13. The connector according to claim 10, wherein the handguard is formed of two mating units, each including one half of the handguard, and arranged for mating fit around the barrel of a firearm.

14. The rail connector according to claim 3, wherein said fastening members merge into two pivotally connected legs.

15. The rail connector according to claim 14, wherein said legs, when in a closed orientation, form an accessory rail arranged to seat above a barrel of the firearm.

16. A method for preparing the rail connector of claim 3 comprising connecting a rail to a firearm having a front sight, wherein said the method comprises comprising:

forming at least two mounting rails; and

coupling to said mounting rails said a fastening member for securely fastening said the connector directly to the front sight of said the firearm.

17. The method according to claim 16, wherein said step of coupling includes coupling said fastening member between said mounting rails so as to permit mounting of said rails on opposite sides of said front sight.

18. The method according to claim 16, wherein said step of forming includes forming six mounting rails.

Appl. No. 10/668,020
Prelim. Amdt. dated June 24, 2004
Prior to First Office Action

19. The method according to claim 16, further comprising integrally forming a handguard portion with the fastening member, said handguard portion being integrally formed with at least one rail.

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein said handguard portion is integrally formed with four rails.

21. The method according to claim 16, wherein said fastening member merges into two pivotally connected legs which, when in a closed orientation, form an accessory rail arranged to seat above a barrel of the firearm.